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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Indiana Farm Service Agency Program Updates

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Sonny Perdue Sworn in as 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Sonny Perdue was sworn in as the 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by fellow Georgian and Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Clarence Thomas in a brief ceremony on April 25 at the Supreme Court building.

Perdue grew up on a dairy and diversified row crop farm in Bonaire, Georgia. Being uniquely qualified as a former farmer, agribusinessman, veterinarian, state legislator and governor of Georgia, he has experienced the agriculture industry from every possible perspective throughout his life.

As secretary, Perdue says he will champion the concerns of farmers, ranchers, foresters and producers, and will work tirelessly to solve the issues facing our farm families.

Perdue's policies as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture will be guided by four principles which will inform his decisions. First, he will maximize the ability of the men and women of America's agriculture and agribusiness sector to create jobs, to produce and sell the foods and fiber that feed and clothe the world, and to reap the earned reward of their labor. Second, he will prioritize customer service every day for American taxpayers and consumers. Third, as Americans expect a safe and secure food supply, USDA will continue to serve in the critical role of ensuring the food we put on the table to feed our families meets the strict safety standards we've established. And fourth, Perdue will always remember that America's agricultural bounty comes directly from the land.

For more information about Secretary Perdue, visit www.usda.gov.

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Nominations Open June 15 for the 2017 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in their local County Committee election nomination process which opens June 15.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year. County committees may have one or more appointed advisors to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and land owners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

All nomination forms for the 2017 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2017. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member* available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or contact your local FSA office.

Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

Producers who wish to receive history credit for either prevented planting or failed acreage must file a Notice of Loss with the Farm Service Agency.

Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

The final planting date for corn in Indiana is June 5th and the final planting date for soybeans is June 20th (for both initial and double crop).

The final planting date for 2017 wheat was either October 20 or October 30 in Indiana depending on location. Producers should contact their local office if they are unaware of the final planting date in their county. The date to timely file a prevented planting request for wheat in Indiana has passed for 2016. However, producers may submit a late filed report. FSA will accept the report as timely if it was filed timely with crop insurance. If not producers will be assessed a measurement service fee per farm and FSA will consider late filed requests dependent upon the assessment of the disaster condition during a farm visit.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should file form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report acreage destroyed or damaged by disaster. This must be filed prior to destruction of the crop to provide FSA with an opportunity to inspect the acreage.

For losses on crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Additionally, many crops covered by NAP require an initial notification of loss be made to the FSA administrative office within 72 hours of loss occurrence or loss becoming apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses to ensure the opportunity to receive acreage reporting history credit for the crop as well as potential program benefits.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local county FSA office.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2016, through Sept. 30, 2017, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope.

Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certification fees, late fees and inspections necessary to address National Organic Program regulatory violations.

Producers and handlers may submit OCCSP applications to FSA county offices or they may apply through participating State Agencies, which will be listed at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index> as their agreements to administer the program are finalized.

The FSA OCCSP application form is available at USDA's eForms site, by selecting "Browse forms" and entering "OCCSP" in the "title or keywords" field on the search page.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Required Management on CRP Acres

Participants in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are responsible for maintaining the acreage under contract to the minimum specifications and acreages as required by their conservation plan and supporting documents. This includes not only controlling excessive weeds, invasive species, and trees in grass practices, but completing required management on CRP practices as scheduled in conservation plans as well.

The purpose of required management activities, commonly referred to as mid contract management (MCM), is to enhance the wildlife habitat value of the enrolled acres for species such as Northern Bobwhite, pollinators, and others. In grass practices, the perennial grasses tend to crowd out the desired broadleaf plants, litter accumulates and plant diversity declines. In tree practices, thinning or pruning may be needed to improve tree growth or enhancements needed in open areas to encourage plant diversity for wildlife. MCM is now required on all new practices and if not already required, is optional on all older contracts.

These activities (as well as any treatment for weed control or maintenance) must be completed outside of the primary nesting season. In Indiana, the primary nesting season for a contract that was approved for enrollment prior to February 8, 2007 is from March 1 through July 15th. For newer contracts, the primary nesting season is April 1 through August 1st. Any activities completed during this time period may result in a contract violation and payment reduction.

Required management activities include: prescribed burning, strip disking, strip spraying, inter-seeding forbs/legumes/pollinators, pruning/thinning, inner seedling or shrub planting for diversity. Cost Share is available for eligible practices up to a maximum of \$100 per acre for a 10-year contract or up to \$125 per acre for a 15-year contract over the duration of the contract.

ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

New Actively Engaged Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities

Many Farm Service Agency programs require all program participants, either individuals or legal entities, to be “actively engaged in farming”. This means participants provide a significant contribution to the farming operation, whether it is capital, land, equipment, active personal labor and/or management. For entities, each partner, stockholder or member with an ownership interest, must contribute active personal labor and/or management to the operation on a regular basis.

The 2014 Farm Bill established additional payment eligibility provisions relating to the farm management component of meeting “actively engaged in farming”. These new provisions apply to joint operations comprised of non-family members or partners, stockholders or persons with an ownership in the farming operation. Effective for 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations are afforded to one member that may use a significant contribution of active personal management exclusively to meet the requirements to be determined “actively engaged in farming”. The person or member will be defined as the Farm Manager for the purposes of administering these new management provisions.

In some instances, additional persons or members of a non-family member joint operation who meet the definition of Farm Manager may also be allowed to use such a contribution of active personal management to meet the eligibility requirements. However, under no circumstances may the number of Farm Managers in a non-family joint operation exceed a total of three in any given crop and program year.

MAL and LDP Policy

The Agricultural Act of 2014 authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), with a few minor policy changes.

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar and extra-long staple cotton.

Before MAL market gain repayments and LDP disbursements can be made, producers must meet the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash rent tenant and member contribution.

Additionally, form CCC-902 and CCC-901 must be submitted for the 2016 crop year, if applicable, with a county committee determination and updated subsidiary files.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, producers must have form CCC-633EZ, Page 1 on file at their local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested.

The 2014 Farm Bill also establishes payment limitations per individual or entity not to exceed \$125,000 annually on certain commodities for the following program benefits: price loss coverage payments, agriculture risk coverage payments, marketing loan gains (MLGs) and LDPs. These payment limitations do not apply to MAL loan disbursements.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions were modified by the 2014 Farm Bill, which states that a producer whose total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds \$900,000 is not eligible to receive an MLG or LDP.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, please visit a nearby USDA Service Center or FSA's website www.fsa.usda.gov.

Cover Crop Guidelines

Recently the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) worked together to develop consistent, simple and a flexible policy for cover crop practices.

The termination and reporting guidelines were updated for cover crops.

Termination:

The cover crop termination guidelines provide the timeline for terminating cover crops, are based on zones and apply to non-irrigated cropland. To view the zones and additional guidelines visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/landuse/crops/> and click "Cover Crop Termination Guidelines."

Reporting:

The intended use of cover only will be used to report cover crops. This includes crops that were terminated by tillage and reported with an intended use code of green manure. An FSA policy change will allow cover crops to be hayed and grazed. Program eligibility for the cover crop that is being hayed or grazed will be determined by each specific program.

If the crop reported as cover only is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated properly, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop.

Crops reported with an intended use of cover only will not count toward the total cropland on the farm. In these situations a subsequent crop will be reported to account for all cropland on the farm.

Cover crops include grasses, legumes, and forbs, for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes. Cover crops are primarily used for erosion control, soil health improvement, and water quality improvement. The cover crop may be terminated by natural causes, such as frost, or intentionally terminated through chemical application, crimping, rolling, tillage or cutting. A cover crop managed and terminated according to NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines is **not** considered a crop for crop insurance purposes.

Cover crops can be planted: with no subsequent crop planted, before a subsequent crop, after prevented planting acreage, after a planted crop, or into a standing crop.

Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Seeks Feedback from Growers About 2017 Crops, Stock, Inventories, Values

During the next several weeks, U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct two major mid-year surveys, the June Agricultural Survey and the June Area Survey. The agency will survey over 2000 farmers across Indiana to determine crop production and supplies levels in 2017.

Due to the widespread and significant impact of its results, the June Agricultural Survey, also known as the Crops/Stocks Survey, and the June Area Survey are two of the most important and well-known surveys NASS conducts. When growers respond to these surveys, they provide essential information that helps NASS determine the prospective production and supply of major commodities in the United States for the 2017 crop year. Everyone who relies on agriculture for their livelihoods is interested in the results.

NASS gathers the data for the June Agricultural Survey online, by mail, phone and in-person interview. For the June Area Survey, agency representatives visit randomly selected tracts of land and interview the operators of any farm or ranch on that land. Growers provide information on crop acreage - including biotech crops - as well as grain stocks, livestock inventory, cash rents, land values, and value of sales.

NASS will compile and analyze the survey information and publish the results in a series of USDA reports, including the annual *Acreage* report and quarterly *Grain Stocks* report, both to be released June 30, 2017. Survey data contribute to NASS's monthly and annual *Crop Production* reports, as well as the annual *Small Grains Summary* and USDA's monthly *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates*.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes only state and national-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified. NASS recognizes this is a hectic time for farmers and ranchers, but the information they provide helps U.S. agriculture remain viable and capable.

All reports are available on the NASS website: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications>.

For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Great Lakes Regional Field Office at (800) 453-7501.

Purdue Extension Invites Military Veterans and Active Duty Personnel to Beginning Farmer Veteran Tours and Workshops

Purdue Extension invites all military veterans and active duty personnel to attend a Beginning Farmer Veteran Tour and Workshop on the following dates:

July 8, 2017: Tuttle Orchard, 5717 N 300 W, Greenfield, Indiana. The orchard offers tours, a café on site, U-Pick pumpkins and apples, annuals, and perennials as well as offer a CSA. Inside their store, they carry their own cider and apples as well as other Indiana products. The morning session will be held at Buck Creek Township Fire Department, 5809 W Airport Blvd., Greenfield, and focus on basic orchard and fruit tree care followed by lunch and an afternoon tour of Tuttle Orchard and a pruning class.

August 12, 2017: Crowl Cattle is a veteran owned and operated small farm located in Lafayette, Indiana. After returning home from Afghanistan in 2011, Cadel and his wife Rebecca started their herd and have since worked to improve their genetics, management practices, and carcass/meat quality along the way. Cows are grazed on locally rented pastures and weaned calves are retained for replacement heifers and freezer beef for families across Indiana.

Registration is limited so please register soon at this link <http://www.cvent.com/events/beginning-farmer-tours-and-workshops/event-summary-0f7526f0380a432788708b2f2edcf1e7.aspx>.

For more information and other e-mail updates, please contact Cindy Chastain at chastai1@purdue.edu or Katherine Prasuhn at kslong@purdue.edu, or 765-496-2377.

Dates to Remember

Continuing through August 1, 2017: Enrollment for 2017 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs

May 31: Final date to obtain loans or LDPs on 2016 harvested feed grains and soybeans

June 1: Date used to establish ownership interest for person or legal entity for program purposes

June 1: Date used for the determination of minor child for program purposes

June 1: Final date to file AD-1026 for 2018 reinsurance year for crop insurance eligibility

June 15: Reporting date for cucumbers (Planted 5/1 to 5/31) in Knox County

June 15: Nomination period begins for nominating farmers as candidates for the local County Committee (COC) Election

June 20: Final date to submit a prevented planting claim for corn

July 1: MPP-Dairy 2018 registration and election begins

July 4: Offices closed in observance of Independence Day

July 5: Final date to submit a prevented planting claim for soybeans

July 15: Reporting date for all other crops (including cucumbers planted 5/10-6/15) in all other counties in Indiana

August 1: Deadline to request farm reconstitutions and transfers for 2017

August 1: Last day to file COC election nomination forms at the local FSA county office

August 15: Reporting date for cucumbers (planted 6/16-8/5 in Fulton, LaPorte, Porter and St. Joseph Counties)

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